

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

MARCH 30, 2010

Proclaim Disparities in Infant Mortality Awareness Day

In the United States, infant mortality rates have steadily declined over the past several decades from 26 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1960 to 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000. Los Angeles County (County) has also experienced a decline in rates falling from an average of 5.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1997 to 4.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007. These declines are attributed to advances in neonatal medicine, declining rates of maternal smoking and better prenatal care. Nevertheless, African Americans continue to experience higher rates of infant mortality nationally and at the local level.

The Countywide infant mortality rate for African Americans is 11.6 deaths per 1,000 live births, twice as high as the overall County rate. In 2007, African American babies comprised 8% of all births but more than 16% of all infant deaths. Within the County's eight Service Planning Areas (SPA), both the Antelope Valley and South Los Angeles regions have the highest rates of infant mortality amongst African Americans,

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18.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in the Antelope Valley and 21 deaths per 1,000 live births in South Los Angeles.

To combat disparities contributing to higher rates of infant mortality, the Los Angeles County Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Infant Mortality and the American Medical Association will host a conference on April 6th to provide education around the reduction of health disparities. Taking steps to increase communication and awareness can enhance the quality of medical care delivered to African Americans in the County and reduce the overall disparities related to high infant mortality rates.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Proclaim April 6, 2010 Disparities in Infant Mortality Awareness Day throughout Los Angeles County, and in doing so, urge all citizens, County officials, as well as community groups, clubs and organizations to join this effort in promoting awareness of existing disparities throughout our communities; and
2. Encourage medical providers to participate in the "Health Care Disparities: Closing the Gap" Conference at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion on April 6, 2010 by contacting the Los Angeles County Partnership to Eliminate Disparities in Infant Mortality or the American Medical Association to obtain information.

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